



Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program

Quarterly Newsletter

Items of Interest

- Volume Revisions
- HSEEP Initiatives
- Recent and Upcoming Events
- HSEEP Exercise and Program Management Highlights



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with comments or questions.

March 2007, Issue 6

The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is a capabilities-based exercise program that provides a standardized methodology and language for the design, development, conduct, and evaluation of all exercises.

The purpose of HSEEP is to facilitate the creation of self-sustaining, capabilities-based exercise programs by providing tools and resources such as policy, guidance, training, technology, and direct support. This blended approach to HSEEP implementation increases exercise expertise, while advancing a standardized means of assessing and improving preparedness across the Nation.

This newsletter was created to communicate new HSEEP initiatives, volume revisions, and recent and upcoming events.

Please note: This edition of the newsletter includes events and initiatives from July 2006 to the present as the most recent HSEEP Newsletter was released in June 2006. Future editions will be published when there is new information to report.

Note: This newsletter outlines new HSEEP-related initiatives and revisions of the volumes; however, the fundamentals of the exercise planning and evaluation process and methodology are not being altered. Tools and resources are being implemented to streamline the exercise process from planning through evaluation. These tools and resources will incorporate new policies, such as *Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPD) 5 and 8*, and ensure a common framework that all exercises, regardless of scenario or scope, can adopt.

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HSEEP Volume Revisions

HSEEP Volume I, II, and III

The HSEEP volumes were revised to incorporate updated policy and guidance, including the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and *National Preparedness Goal*. Specifically, the revised volumes reflect the following changes:

- An explanation of how to incorporate capabilities-based planning into exercise program management, design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning is provided;
- Guidance on utilizing the *Target Capabilities List (TCL)* and *Universal Task List (UTL)* to plan and evaluate exercises is included;
- References to Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Office of Grants & Training (G&T)-specific doctrinal or grant related requirements, such as references to terrorism-only scenarios, have been eliminated; and
- The order of Volumes II and III have been reversed to follow the natural progression of exercise design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.

HSEEP Volume I is an executive summary that provides an overview of HSEEP. Volume I describes exercise program management, defines all seven exercise types, and outlines the five phases of the HSEEP process. Volume II describes the exercise planning phases in detail. Volume III provides guidance on the exercise evaluation and improvement planning process.

Update: HSEEP Volumes I through III have been finalized. Information Bulletin (IB) #245 was disseminated on March 7, 2007, to announce the release of the 2007 editions of Volumes I, II, and III. The revised volumes are available on the HSEEP website at <https://hseep.dhs.gov>. The revised volumes will not be offered in print.

As modifications were made to the volumes, the drafts were posted on the HSEEP public website for review and comment. The draft volumes were also circulated throughout the Federal Government. Feedback was received from our partners at all levels of government. The comments were reconciled and incorporated to make the volumes more applicable to all exercises, regardless of scope, scale, scenario, or sponsoring agency.

Additionally, the Deputy Secretaries across the Federal Government were briefed on the HSEEP volumes on January 26, 2007, and they approved and endorsed the HSEEP methodology. All exercises across the Federal Government (except for those wholly internal to the organizations conducting them) will be required to adhere to the methodology, terminology, and standards articulated in the HSEEP volumes.

Please send any comments or questions regarding the volumes to hseep@dhs.gov.

HSEEP Volume V

HSEEP Volume V: Prevention Exercises provides guidance to assist jurisdictions in designing and evaluating exercises that test prevention capabilities such as intelligence analysis and information sharing, and is consistent with the HSEEP model. Volume V provides guidance and a uniform approach to prevention exercise foundation, design, development, conduct, and evaluation.

The Terrorism Prevention Exercise Program (TPEP) follows the guidance outlined in Volume V and is currently being piloted at locations throughout the country.

Update: The draft HSEEP Volume V was posted to the HSEEP website during the summer of 2006. Based on feedback received to date, several recommended revisions to Volume V have been addressed. HSEEP Volume V has been temporarily removed from the HSEEP website as lessons learned and best practices are being gathered from the pilot exercises currently underway. These lessons learned and best practices will be captured and integrated into the revised HSEEP Volume V. Relevant sections of the revised HSEEP Volume V draft will be posted on the HSEEP website for user

feedback.

The TPEP is continuing to develop and validate the prevention exercise methodologies and tools discussed in Volume V through targeted pilot prevention exercises with some of our State and local partners.

The TPEP has spent almost two years researching best practices and lessons learned for prevention exercising from the State and local community. Using HSEEP guidance as a foundation, combined with information gathered from existing prevention exercise programs and lessons learned from State, local, Tribal, regional, Federal, and private sector partners, the TPEP has incorporated lessons learned and best practices into a comprehensive approach for conducting discussion and operations-based prevention exercises.

The TPEP is developing several exercise tools to be used in tandem with HSEEP Volume V methodology to give exercise planners additional leverage to be able to plan, design, conduct, and evaluate realistic, valuable prevention exercises. The TPEP has initiated the development of a comprehensive Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Library to provide stakeholders with a baseline template for creating prevention exercise scenarios. Injects contained within the MSEL Library are “intelligence-driven” and follow the National Planning Scenarios.

The TPEP also continues development of the Information Management Plan, which provides guidance on managing sensitive exercise material and documentation. The Information Sharing Environment Analysis (ISEA) process is also in development, which provides exercise planners with a “snapshot” of a jurisdiction’s information-sharing environment to be replicated in the exercise environment.

For more information regarding Volume V or the TPEP, please contact tpep@dhs.gov.

Exercise Evaluation Guides

The HSEEP Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) are the standard mechanism for exercise evaluation. The EEGs ensure that After Action Reports/Improvement Plans (AARs/IPs) support the *National Preparedness Goal* requirement to consistently assess the Nation’s preparedness. By contributing to the development of exercise AARs/IPs, the EEGs have become a consistent feedback mechanism, helping entities identify strengths and areas for improvement in their performance.

The revised EEGs utilize the *TCL* and performance-related activities, tasks, and performance measures to provide consistent exercise evaluation across organizations. In addition to the pre-identified tasks within the EEGs, entities are encouraged to tailor each EEG by adding additional tasks and/or measures specific to their plans, processes, and procedures.

An Exercise Evaluation Working Group was created in 2005 to encourage a common exercise evaluation methodology and the use of common tools across Federal, State, local, and Tribal levels of government and the private sector. Lessons learned from participating agencies and programs were also included in the revised *HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning*, AAR/IP guidelines, and EEGs.

Update: The EEGs for operations-based exercises for the target capabilities within the *TCL* have been finalized (EEGs for discussion-based exercises are currently being developed). The EEGs were released with the 2007 edition of *HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning*. The EEGs can be found on the HSEEP website at <https://hseep.dhs.gov>. The EEG Library (EEGL), linked to HSEEP Volume III on the HSEEP website, includes each of the EEGs as well as additional guidance and support materials.

Prior to finalization, the EEGs were reviewed by small groups of subject matter experts (SMEs) to validate the *TCL* components used to develop the guides. The reviews included participants from the initial *TCL* working groups as well as exercise and evaluation SMEs, members of the InterAgency Board (IAB) Training Subgroup, and the Exercise Evaluation Working Group members.

The fourth meeting of the Exercise Evaluation Working Group convened on August 30, 2006. Working Group participants discussed the revised AAR/IP template and were presented with a revised EEG format. The fifth Exercise Evaluation Working Group meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2007. The agenda will include a detailed review of the Corrective Action Program (CAP) System and discussion of a feedback mechanism to ensure that HSEEP policy and guidance and the EEGs evolve based on feedback from field use.

HSEEP Initiatives

National Standard Exercise Curriculum

The National Standard Exercise Curriculum (NSEC) is a current effort to unify curricula in exercise program management, design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning across the country. The NSEC strategy involves providing guidance to Federal, State, and local jurisdictions concerning the exercise and training curricula, workshops, and briefings.

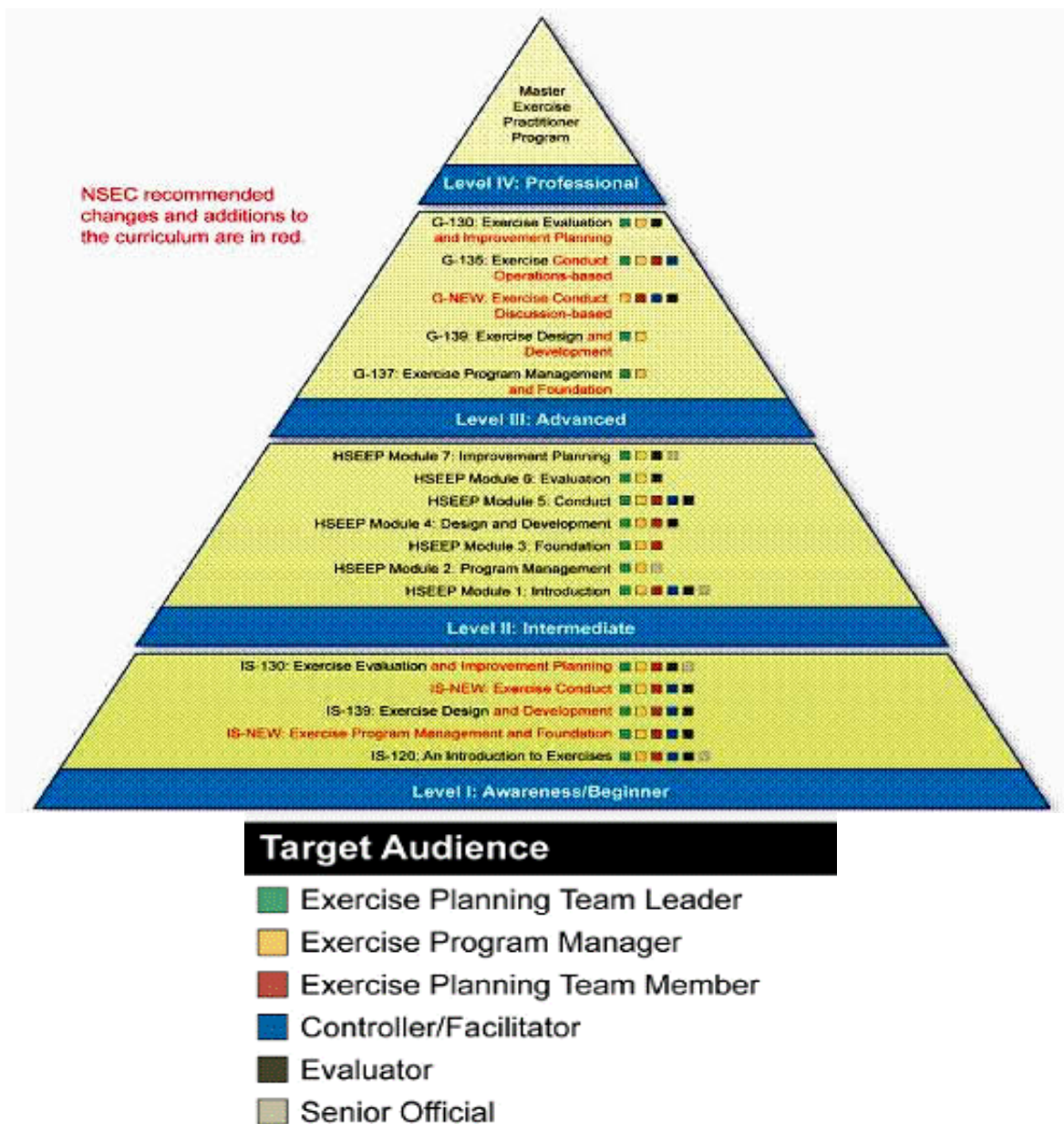
The initial goal for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and the Preparedness Directorate is to align their respective exercise curricula with HSEEP to ensure consistency. The NSEC strategy provides exercise training and reinforcement guidance to Federal, State, and local jurisdictions and the private sector.

Major objectives of the curriculum development process include:

- Establish planning guidance to align coursework into a national standardized exercise curriculum
- Ensure consistency across all exercise training curricula in accordance with NIMS and the *National Preparedness Goal*
- Shape future efforts in exercise training and course development
- Provide a clear path for students to become a beginner, intermediate, and ultimately a master exercise practitioner
- Integrate HSEEP into the Master Exercise Practitioner Program (MEPP)

Update: The NSEC Working Group has proposed adjustments and restructuring of current curricula at four different levels including: FEMA Independent Study (IS) Courses, State-offered “G” courses, and the MEPP. The Working Group has also proposed guidance to help organizations determine appropriate courses for selected target audiences.

The following diagram depicts a proposed mapping of exercise courses to give students a clear path as to what courses they might take from an exercise beginner to the professional level. Proposed additional courses and/or adjustments are noted in red.



Courses that have already been significantly revised under this effort include the IS-120.a course, G-130 course, and the E-132 course. Most recently, the NSEC Working Group completed the revision of the MEPP E-132 course to reflect consistency with HSEEP methodology and terminology. The revised course was delivered February 5-9, 2007, at EMI in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

The G-130 course is being revised and will be available as an IS course. The revised title is *IS-130: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning*. This course will address the capabilities-based exercise evaluation methodology as described in HSEEP Volume III. The course will focus on the evaluation of an exercise and include evaluation best practices as described within the existing G-130. Stakeholders are welcome to beta-test the web-based course at <http://hcs.icfi.com/FEMA/EXEV/>. A survey is attached to the end of the course for feedback. Beta-test feedback will be collected through Friday, April 6, 2007. Additionally, if you have any comments or questions, please email Tracy Esparza at tesparza@icfi.com.

The IS-120 Course, which is being re-designated as IS-120.a, is still experiencing technical problems, which are preventing the course from being posted to the EMI site.

The NSEC Working Group is currently focusing on integrating HSEEP into the MEPP and will review and revise as necessary all courses within the MEPP. With the revision of MEPP course E-132 completed, the Working Group has begun to review and revise the next course in the series, E-133. The revised E-133 course will be delivered June 4-8, 2007.

HSEEP Website

The HSEEP website serves as the central interface and destination for inquiries related to new HSEEP initiatives, communications, related links, tools, and applications. The HSEEP website can be accessed at <https://hseep.dhs.gov>.

Update: The HSEEP website has been enhanced to include a homepage link to “About HSEEP.” The “About HSEEP” page includes *HSEEP 101*, which provides an overview of HSEEP terminology and methodology, HSEEP compliance guidelines, and additional relevant information; an overview and background of HSEEP; and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). The FAQs page provides users with a comprehensive list of questions and answers collected by Exercise Managers and Preparedness Officers or received in the hseep@dhs.gov email account.

An HSEEP Toolkit page has also been created and is available from the HSEEP homepage. The Toolkit page provides users with one location for overviews of each of the Toolkit components including the National Exercise Schedule (NEXS) System, the Design and Development System (DDS), and the CAP System. The page offers component fact sheets, surveys, and user manuals without requiring users to log into the tools. While users can link directly to the components from the HSEEP website homepage, they can also link to the tools from the Toolkit page.

Many of the links on the HSEEP website are publicly available; however, some of the HSEEP tools, such as components of the HSEEP Toolkit, are password protected. To request access to the HSEEP Toolkit components, please send an email to the new HSEEP Toolkit Helpdesk at support@hseep.net.

Lessons Learned Information Sharing **New**

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov) is a national, online network of lessons learned and best practices for the emergency response and homeland security communities. LLIS.gov has recently undergone a number of site enhancements, including a stronger search engine, updated document categorization scheme, and a new content notification feature.

LLIS.gov provides exercise planners and managers with several useful tools. Many of the lessons learned captured in the new AAR template and CAP System will be directed to LLIS.gov. Redacted AARs are also available on the system, along with best practices in exercise program management, planning, conduct, and evaluation. LLIS.gov has also created a new HSEEP Resource page that provides frequently updated HSEEP information as well as new LLIS.gov exercise-related original content. To share your exercise-related lessons learned and best practices, please log into LLIS.gov and click on the feedback link.

Please visit the LLIS.gov homepage to apply for a username and password.

Exercise Program Management and Planning Lessons Learned

LLIS.gov continues to distribute exercise program management and planning lessons learned to the homeland security community. This research initiative will continue to produce a wide array of new content on issues including:

- Managing and maintaining an effective exercise program (e.g. multi-year exercise planning, scheduling, and monitoring)
- Designing and developing exercises (e.g., recruiting actor volunteers, coordinating exercise logistics, handling media-related issues, forming a planning team)
- Coordinating training courses with exercises
- Evaluating exercises and tracking improvements

Update: In November 2006, LLIS.gov introduced a new Exercise Planning and Program Management resource center. This resource center contains unique and hard-to-find resources, including the newest type of LLIS.gov content, *Practice Notes*. LLIS.gov researchers conducted dozens of interviews with exercise practitioners to develop several Practice Note

documents highlighting their most innovative practices. The resource center also hosts Lessons Learned and Good Stories. Users can also access a library of AARs/IPs, exercise planning documents, and news events that can serve as models for exercise scenarios.

The resource center enables users to submit documents, comments, experiences, and observations that support exercise planning and program management professionals nationwide. Individuals can also send innovative practices, in any area of homeland security or emergency response, to feedback@llis.dhs.gov.

To access the resource center, click on Exercise Planning and Program Management found in the "Featured Topics" section of the LLIS.gov homepage.

NEXS and NEXS System

The NEXS is the compilation of all national-level, Federal, State, Tribal, and local exercises. It provides important information on each planned exercise including exercise name, location, date, major participants, and points-of-contact, and is located within the NEXS System. The NEXS System serves as a web-based management tool to facilitate scheduling, deconfliction, and synchronization of all exercises. The NEXS System is a component of the HSEEP Toolkit and is located on the HSEEP website at <https://hseep.dhs.gov>.

Update: The new NEXS System was released for public use in fall 2006. The NEXS System replaced the exercise scheduling aspect of the Centralized Scheduling Information System (CSIS) on the G&T Secure Portal. All previous exercise data entered into CSIS were migrated to the NEXS System and the scheduling functions of the CSIS were disabled.

To date, 107 Exercise Administrative Authorities (EAAs), or schedulers, from 40 States and Territories and 26 Federal departments/agencies have been trained on the NEXS System. Training was delivered through 24 separate WebExes (instructor-led via dual online/voice conference). Training for the remaining EAAs is ongoing.

The NEXS Working Group met in January 2007 to review the deployment of the new NEXS System, discuss the changes to the NEXS System for Version 1.0, and solicit feedback on the upcoming Version 2.0 and Version 3.0 releases of the NEXS System. The group also discussed other concerns and comments regarding planned NEXS System enhancements.

The next NEXS Working Group meeting is March 28, 2007, and will include Federal, State, and local representatives. The group will review the deployment of Version 1.0 and address upcoming changes to the NEXS System in Version 2.0 and 3.0.

For additional information on the NEXS System, or to find out about the next EAA training session, contact Bill Schwinn, NEXS Program Manager, at NEXS@dhs.gov.

CAP System **New**

The CAP System, a component of the HSEEP Toolkit, is a web-based application that allows Federal, State, and local officials to track, prioritize, and analyze corrective actions following exercises, policy discussions, and real-world events. The CAP System simplifies the process for implementing IPs and tracking corrective actions.

It enables users to quickly enter IP data, assign action officers to monitor progress, and track resolution of corrective actions from initial assignment to completion. It further facilitates enhanced IP development by allowing the user to create custom reports on specific corrective actions and linking to resources found on LLIS.gov.

In July 2006, DHS released a beta version of the CAP System that included data from both notional events and real-world exercises. On November 13, 2006, the CAP System Version 1.0 was released and made available to the larger HSEEP community. A series of training materials and documents are available on the HSEEP website. HSEEP will also offer web-based training upon request.

With the release of the revised HSEEP volumes and associated AAR/IP template, stakeholders are strongly encouraged to register for the CAP System and to begin using it as a tool for tracking corrective actions. For general questions, please contact hseep@dhs.gov. For access to the CAP System, please contact support@hseep.net. The CAP System can be found on the HSEEP website at <https://hseep.dhs.gov>.

Annual Improvement Planning Conference Briefing **New**

A pilot of the capabilities-based Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (T&EPW) was conducted in Mississippi in January 2006. One of the lessons learned from the pilot was the need for an annual Improvement Planning Conference to be conducted prior to each T&EPW.

The annual Improvement Planning Conference provides an opportunity to review corrective actions from the previous year's exercises and real world events, and to determine new priorities for the training and exercise program. These priorities will be the foundation for development of the Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan and Schedule, which is revised annually at the T&EPW.

The Improvement Planning Conference should be held annually, as close to the beginning of the calendar year as possible, and at least 30 days prior to the T&EPW. This allows jurisdictions to refine the materials developed at the Improvement Planning Conference and to distribute them to T&EPW participants.

The first half of the Improvement Planning Conference should be spent reviewing the previous year's IPs to identify completed and outstanding corrective actions. The second half of the conference should focus on prioritizing the incomplete corrective actions and synchronizing the revised priorities with the *TCL*. The final language can be polished after the Improvement Planning Conference, but at the earliest convenience of T&EPW participants to allow for sufficient review time prior to the T&EPW.

An example of an Improvement Planning Conference Briefing is available on the HSEEP website at <https://hseep.dhs.gov>. Please contact hseep@dhs.gov if you have specific questions about the Improvement Planning Conference concept or briefing.

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Recent and Upcoming Events

G&T 2006 National Conference: *A Partnership in Preparedness* **New**

G&T held its first National Conference November 28-30, 2006, in Washington, D.C. The conference offered sessions on a multitude of topics throughout its duration, including issues specific to State, local, regional, and private sector homeland security partners. Specifically, the conference covered the National Priorities and G&T programs and current initiatives.

The goal of the conference was to involve and listen to stakeholders. G&T wanted to better understand stakeholder perspectives and experiences in regard to implementing the National Priorities, and receive stakeholder input on what G&T can do to improve its programs.

The conference materials, including the presentations, speaker biographies, and fact sheets, are stored on the G&T Secure Portal. To access the materials, please send an email to askcsid@dhs.gov for portal access.

Tactical Interoperable Communications Exercises

On March 23, 2006, IB #205 announced that 75 metropolitan areas (termed “sites”) around the country must conduct Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) Full-Scale exercises on or before September 31, 2006. This was an accelerated timeline; the original completion date for the exercises was May 2007. Over the summer and into the fall of 2006, a collaborative effort among Federal, State, and local representatives resulted in the successful completion of all 75 exercises or events.

In his speech to the Tactical Interoperable Communications Conference in May 2006, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff called for the development of a scorecard that would assess the maturity of an urban/metropolitan area’s tactical interoperable communications capabilities: “By the end of this year, each urban area is going to get a scorecard... that will identify gaps and help us to determine the improvements we need to make in the near term.”

G&T, in coordination with SAFECOM and the Wireless Management Office (WMO), leveraged the Interoperability Maturity Measurement Model to develop the scorecard framework. The TICP, TICP Peer Review, EEG, and follow-up discussions, in conjunction with AAR/IPs, were used to formulate a Scorecard for each of the participating urban/metropolitan areas. Scorecards were finalized and released to the public in January 2007.

LLIS.gov will develop and publish lessons learned from the TICP full-scale exercises (FSEs). The LLIS.gov research team is currently reviewing the TICP AAR/IPs to extract Lessons Learned and Practice Notes. These documents will be published by LLIS.gov in the coming weeks and highlighted on a new TICP resource page. Please contact LLIS.gov at feedback@llis.dhs.gov to submit your TICP lessons learned or to be interviewed by an LLIS.gov researcher.

2007 Hurricane Preparedness Exercise Effort **New**

The Hurricane Preparedness Exercise Effort will facilitate preparing for, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating the effects of hurricanes and severe tropical storms for the 2007 hurricane season. The Division will follow up on last year's hurricane preparedness efforts with a Functional Exercise (FE) in FEMA Region I running from April 30 to May 10, 2007. This FE will comprise the Hurricane Yvette component of the Department of Defense (DoD) Ardent Sentry/Northern Edge 2007 (ASNE 07) national-level exercise.

At the Federal level, the Exercise and Evaluation Division, in coordination with FEMA, will conduct a tabletop exercise (TTX) for the Emergency Support Function Leadership Group (ESFLG) to validate the 2007 National Hurricane Contingency Plan (CONPLAN) and prepare for participation in ASNE 07.

Regional workshops are being offered in FEMA Regions II, III, IV, VI, and IX, as well as in FEMA's Caribbean Division and Pacific Area offices. Currently, each hurricane-prone FEMA region is developing region-specific hurricane contingency plans, designed to complement the National CONPLAN. The regional workshops will provide an opportunity to review and validate the 2007 National CONPLAN and to synchronize the regional plans with the national CONPLAN and State plans. Alternatively, some regions will choose to validate their region-specific plans during existing exercises within the region.

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HSEEP Exercise and Program Management Highlights

Exercise Evaluation: South Carolina Emergency Management Division’s Exercise Evaluator Recruitment **New**

The South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) requires all agencies participating in an exercise to provide individuals who have in-depth knowledge of agency policies, plans, and procedures to serve as exercise evaluators. This practice guarantees that SCEMD has enough qualified evaluators on hand at an exercise, reduces the amount of time needed for evaluator training, and ensures that agencies implement recommendations contained

in AARs.

Traditionally, the SCEMD Training Section recruited individuals from agencies and localities not participating in the exercise to serve as evaluators. Prior to the exercise, SCEMD provided these evaluators with basic evaluator training, as well as the standard operating procedures (SOPs) of participating agencies. SCEMD found that exercise participants often contested the evaluators' recommendations and observations, and refused to implement corrective actions.

In 2004, SCEMD instituted measures to address this problem. SCEMD requires all agencies participating in state-sponsored exercises to provide their own exercise evaluators. SCEMD does not dictate who serves as evaluators, but emphasizes that the individuals must possess in-depth knowledge about their respective agency's policies and procedures. Most evaluators are officials from either the planning or the operations branch of their agency. During the exercise, evaluators focus specifically on their respective agency and evaluate overall exercise performance. Evaluators must attend the final planning conference, a training session prior to the exercise, the post-exercise hot wash, the evaluator debrief, and the after-action conference.

SCEMD successfully addressed several common exercise program management issues by requiring participating agencies to provide exercise evaluators. Participating agencies are now more respectful of the evaluators' determinations and are more likely to implement corrective actions. The SCEMD no longer struggles to have an adequate number of qualified evaluators on hand. The initiative also reduced the amount of resources needed for evaluator training.

For more Exercise Program Management and Planning Lessons Learned and Good Stories, please visit [LLIS.gov](https://llis.gov).

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To provide feedback on the HSEEP newsletter or share an exercise or program management story to be used in a future issue, please send an email to hseep@dhs.gov.